



Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

THE ORIGIN AND THE FORMAL CONTENTS OF THE TALMUD.

BY REV. P. A. NORDELL.

The Talmud (from למד to teach) is a depository of law, theology, exegesis, philosophy, natural science, medical learning, ethics, political and domestic economy, as these were understood and discussed in the Rabbinical schools for the space of nearly a thousand years after the return from Babylon. The numberless rules of conduct which had become an intolerable burden to the common people in Christ's days are here. Here are the hair-splitting dialectics, the subtle casuistries by which the rabbis, sitting in Moses' seat, played hide and seek with truth and righteousness. Beside this, there is a mass of mythological and legendary lore, parables, anecdotes of the rabbis, the whole tossed together in what seems at first sight almost chaotic confusion. There is hardly anything in heaven or on earth not discussed in the Talmud.

It is a mistake to suppose that the Talmud is a species of commentary on the inspired texts of the Old Testament. The Talmud claims co-ordinate rank with the Mosaic law. But the Jews themselves have not been content with such modest claims. That the Talmud in their estimate far outweighs the Scriptures in sanctity and authority is clear from the oft-quoted saying of the rabbis, "The Bible is water, but the Talmud is wine," and that it is a waste of time to study the former when one may study the latter. It is useless to argue with a Talmudist even out of the Pentateuch itself, for he answers out of the more venerated Talmud.

This excessive veneration springs from the Jewish theory of the origin of the Talmud. It is the oral as distinguished from the written law. The former inspired as well as the latter. The relation of the one to the other is well illustrated by the following example given by Moses ben Maimon in "Die Einleitung des Talmud." "The Holy One, blessed be he, said to Moses, 'In booths shall ye dwell seven days.' Afterwards he made known to him that these booths were for men only, and not for women, nor was the injunction to dwell in them incumbent on invalids or travellers; and that the cover should not be made of anything else than a sapling from the earth.... Furthermore he made known to him that it was obligatory to eat, drink, and sleep therein, and that its size should be not less than seven palms long, by seven palms wide, and the height not less than ten palms." All these additional regulations not

given in the Pentateuch were held as sacred and obligatory as the written commandments. This second law, or Deuterosis, Moses committed in a verbal form to the children of Israel ; and again before his death he repeated it in their hearing. In this manner Moses received 613 commands * and their explanations, viz., the commandments written and the explanations oral. These oral explanations were transmitted through Joshua, Phinehas, and the successive generations of priests and prophets until the time of Rabbi Jehudah, the Holy, in the second century after Christ. By his time the mass of legal decisions, moral reflections, theological discussions, and biblical expositions called Midrashim, produced in the Rabbinic schools, and handed down from teacher to pupil, פה אל־פה, had become so vast, comprehensive, and contradictory even, that it became necessary to reduce it to some shape or order. To his labors we owe that part of the Talmud known as the Mishna.

We speak of the Talmud as if there were but one. There are two, that of Jerusalem and that of Babylon. The Talmud Jerushalmi is the older, but the Talmud Babli is by far the larger and more esteemed of the two. Where the Talmud simply is referred to, the latter is always meant. The name Jerusalem Talmud is not correct, for after the destruction of the Temple by Titus no academy existed at Jerusalem, but at Tiberias, where Rabbi Jehudah lived and taught. The Jerusalem Talmud soon became corrupted by faulty traditions. New decisions were continually promulgated from the younger schools, and this led to endless confusion, remedied in part only by a second recension undertaken by Rabbi Johanan of Tiberias, toward the end of the third century. The confusion arising from contradictory decisions and from academic wrangles, threatened to make chaos of the oral law. In this emergency Rabbi Ashe A. D. 365—427, president of the academy of Sura in Babylon, and his friend and disciple, Rabbi Abina, undertook the cyclopean task of collecting, digesting, and reducing to writing the enormous mass of tradition which had by that time accumulated. This task was completed toward the end of the fifth century, and resulted in a work nearly four times the size of the Jerusalem Talmud.

Both consist of two leading divisions, the Mishna and the Gemara. The former is substantially the same in both, with only such minor differences as exist, for example, between the Hebrew and Septuagint texts of the Old Testament. But the Gemara, which is a commentary on the

* Of these 248 were מצות עשה commands, and 365 לא תעשה or לא יין prohibitions. The number of commands corresponds to the members of the human body, and the prohibitions to the number of days in the solar year.

Mishna is different. In the Jerusalem Talmud the Gemara covers only half the Mishna, but in the Babylon the whole.

The Mishna, not from *שנה* to repeat, but from *שנה* to learn, designates what may be called the text of the Talmud, or the oral law. The *תורה שנעל פה* *verbum Dei non scriptum*, as distinguished from the *תורה שנכתב* *verbum Dei scriptum*. It stands side by side with the written law, supplements and completes it. The dialect is the late Hebrew.

It is only by an accommodation of language that the Gemara can be called a commentary. Its comments consist of diffuse rabbinical discussions and opinions, arranged for and against the disputed question. The diverse materials of which the Gemara is composed and which seem to be heaped together in almost chaotic disorder, are divided into twenty-one classes, known by the technical names of Halacha, Haggada, Joseph-ta, etc. A halacha (*הלכה* lit. a walk, hence a rule by which to walk) is a rabbinic law binding on the life and conscience equally with a positive command of the written law. Haggadoth on the contrary are those lighter portions of the texts which may be considered as "sayings," or things without authority, plays of fancy, legends, anecdotes of the rabbis, allegories and the like—flowers that bloomed alongside the rugged path of halachistic study.

The Gemara is written in Aramaic, that of the Jerusalem being somewhat nearer to the Syriac, while that of the Babylonian is purer both in grammar and vocabulary. Some parts of the Gemara seem to be written in a peculiar dialect unlike either the Syriac or Chaldee.

This compendium of Jewish thought is divided into six rubrics, the so-called *ששה סדרים* or six orders, the initial letters of which give us the technical word *שם* a term by which the Talmud is usually designated and by which it is universally known among the Jews.

These six great divisions of the Talmud are the following:

1. Seder Zeraim, contains 11 treatises, treating of the prayers and blessings to be observed in connection with the products of husbandry, the laws which concern the sabbatical parcircumcision, offerings, tithes, first-fruits, etc., etc.
2. Seder Moed, 12 treatises, the order of festivals, feasts, times, seasons, etc.
3. Seder Nashim, the order of women, 7 treatises, deals with conjugal laws, divorce, marriage duties, etc.

4. Seder Nizekim, the order of injuries, 10 treatises, deals with matters of Rabbinic jurisprudence concerning injuries of various kinds, whether done by men or by cattle.
5. Seder Kodashim, order of consecrations, 11 treatises, treats of sacrifices, oblations, etc.
6. Seder Taharoth, order of purifications, 12 treatises, deals with purity and impurity of various vessels, household furniture, etc., and how they should be cleaned.

These six general orders embrace, as we see, 63 subordinate treatises or Masichtoth. Beside these there are a number of minor treatises called *Masichtoth Ketanoth*, which usually form an appendix to the 9th volume, when the work is printed in 12 volumes.

THE BOOK OF RUTH, CONSIDERED STATISTICALLY.

By C. E. CRANDALL.

The following statistics on the etymology of Ruth were prepared for the purpose of gaining a better knowledge of grammatical forms. Though it was at first intended to analyze only the *verbal* forms, the work was found so profitable that a like treatment of the other parts of speech was included. The results of the work have been summed up and presented in this form in order to suggest to other beginners in the study of the Hebrew language a very useful exercise for private study.

I. VERBS.—The number of different verbs in Ruth is 105; of verbal forms 412. 82 of these verbs, occurring 371 times, are found in the Bible over 25 times.

Of the 26 verbs occurring in the Bible over 500 times, all except **שָׁלַח** are found in this book. Hence 25 of the verbs most frequently used in the Hebrew Scriptures furnish 233 out of a total number of 412 verbal forms in Ruth.

אָמַר occurs 54 times.	8 verbs occur 5—10 times.
הָיָה and נָאֵל occur 20—25 times.	7 “ “ 4 “
בּוֹא , הָלַךְ , and שׁוּב 15—20 times.	9 “ “ 3 “
יָשַׁב , עָשָׂה , מָוֵת , and לָקַט 10—15 times.	20 “ “ twice.
	50 “ “ but once.

עָנָן, *shut up*, and **צָבַט** *reach out*, are not found elsewhere in the Bible.